

Extended Alcohol Serving Hours Bill Killed in Assembly – Again

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A bill that would have enacted a pilot program to allow alcohol to be served between an extra one to two hours per night was voted down in the Assembly on Thursday, killing the bill and prior similar ones for the 4th time since 2017.

Senate Bill 930, authored by Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco), would have started a pilot program in the cities of San Francisco, Palm Springs, and West Hollywood allowing places that serve alcohol to stay open later from January 1, 2025 to January 2, 2028. Last call times would have been shifted from 2 a.m. to 4a.m. on weekends and holidays, and 2 a.m. to 3 a.m. on all other days of the week.

SB 930 would have also set up an additional hours license through the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, with the Department of the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and local law enforce submitting the regional impact of the extended hours program, including if DUI incidents and alcohol-related accidents increased or not during the three year span.

Senator Wiener wrote the bill to help boost tourism, help cities economically, and to let local areas decide if an extended last call would be best for their communities and small businesses. However, much like Wiener's three previous extended alcohol sales bills, including the nearly passed SB 58 in 2019 and the Governor Jerry Brown vetoed SB 905 in 2018, the bill received a lot of opposition from both sides of the aisle, even after numerous amendments.

Originally, SB 930 was much broader, with 7 cities (San Francisco, Oakland, West Hollywood, Cathedral City, Coachella, Palm Springs, Fresno) being a part of the pilot program – already down by three since the 2019 bill after Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Sacramento city officials asked to leave the legislation due to concerns with increased drunk drivers

“This bill threatened public safety in Los Angeles – MORE than before because it not only put consumers of alcohol in danger but all the innocent bystanders that would have been impacted,” said Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Koretz in denouncing a previous bill. “Current data showed we could expect a SPLASH effect of more DUIs, more drunk driving and more deaths in L.A. because drivers are willing to drive 7-40 miles from their Place of Last Drink (POLD). According to the Berkeley, Safe Transportation Research and Education Center, the greatest number of alcohol-involved fatal and severe injuries in California is already concentrated in Los Angeles County.”

With continued concerns, Fresno soon asked to leave, followed by Oakland and two others. With not enough votes coming in to pass the bill, SB 930 was amended further, including reducing the pilot program from five years (Jan. 2025- Jan. 2030) to three years (Jan. 2025 – Jan. 2028). Despite this, opposition continued, with law enforcement groups and minority organizations making a rare team-up to oppose the bill and new CDC info on extended hours being particularly damning, showing how dangerous SB 930 would be, leading everywhere from more alcohol-related deaths a year to costing the state millions more a year to mitigate drunk driving harm on highways alone.

After twice nearly being knocked out of Assembly committees due to high opposition, the Assembly finally knocked down SB 930 on Wednesday in a 25-31 vote with 24 abstentions. While Democrats could have carried the bill, public safety concerns, as well as growing public outrage, turned many to either join GOP Assemblymembers in voting no or, in a crucial decision, simply not voting on the matter. On Wednesday and Thursday, many celebrated the bill being defeated for the 4th time since 2017.

SB 930 defeated in Assembly vote

“Thanks to the intense coalition fighting to kill SB 930, we once again saved lives by defeating this hurtful proposal,” noted Assemblyman Tom Lackey (R-Palmdale), a former CHP officer, on Wednesday.

Others noted that the bill is now likely gone for good, including Alcohol Justice Public Affairs Director Michael Scrippa who said that “The Assembly saw through the authors’ haze of faulty justifications and said NO to this dangerous policy change. To paraphrase a song from the Wizard of Oz, ‘...it’s not only merely dead, it’s really most sincerely dead’. And we are committed to making sure this Zombie last-call bill is gone for good.”

Meanwhile, those supporting the bill, including Senator Wiener, lamented the defeat.

“Senate Bill 930 is a limited pilot program to allow 3 cities — each of which asked to be included — to work with local stakeholders, including law enforcement, to decide locally whether to extend nightlife hours,” explained Senator Wiener in a [statement on Wednesday](#). “SB 930 is a local control bill that lets cities decide what nightlife works best for their communities and small businesses. We are disappointed that SB 930 came up short on votes today on the Assembly floor after a series of misleading speeches by members representing areas that would not have been impacted by the bill. We are assessing whether there is a path to pass the bill off the Assembly floor.”

However, experts noted that any pathway around approval from both houses would be difficult, if not impossible.

“He lost. Multiple times, with Governors, the Assembly, the CDC, law enforcement agencies, and the public telling him that this is such a lousy idea,” explained Dakota Davies, an alcohol-related bill researcher, to the Globe. “But Wiener is so stubborn on this that he isn’t listening to the people or to anyone who would have to deal with the after effects of this.”

As of Thursday, it has not yet been announced if an altered version of the bill will be tried again in the near future.